

50 Tips for Retaining Customers

1. Create a service culture: Each employee should be aware that he/she contributes to customer satisfaction.
2. Have a service vision: Service and customer orientation as the library's 'guiding principle.'
3. Complete participation: Everyone is included in this philosophy, from the management to the staff.
4. Lay down the service policy in writing: No instructions without exceptions, however – every employee has the ability to overstep the rules for the benefit of the customers.
5. Employees are 'empowered': They have the decision-making freedom to respond to customer needs in concrete situations.
6. Further training for employees: The Basis of Good Customer Care!
7. Make service policy public: Let the customer know that efforts are being made to achieve ideal customer satisfaction.
8. Hire 'good' staff.
9. Reward loyalty: Both customers and employees should receive recognition for their commitment to the library.
10. Measure performance: Measure productivity and effectiveness in reference to the standards and make the results public.
11. Mutual training: Employees should be able to perform each other's jobs.
12. Rotation: Let employees also perform tasks from other areas in order to create a broader understanding of interconnections.
13. Create easy access: User-friendly technology and tools.
14. Customer-friendly telephone service: Try calling your library – are callers really helped? Can you hear whether the person who answered the phone is smiling?
15. Flexible rules: The only rule is that the customer is king – support your staff in making independent decisions.
16. Customer education: Every customer contact simultaneously informs and educates about the services the library offers.

17. React appropriately to complaints: The first step should be to 'accept' the customers' irritation, listen carefully to them, ensure them that everything possible is being done to resolve the problem, thank them for having complained.
18. Obtain customer reactions: Acquire systematic information on what the user / customer thinks of the service offers and how they experience these services (surveys, user meetings, reply cards) – make the results public.
19. Age-specific customer orientation: Customer needs change at different stages of life.
20. Suggestions for improvement: In particular those employees with contact to customers should contribute their ideas.
21. Act in a consistent and fair manner: One does not always have to agree with the customer, but one should follow a consistent policy.
22. Keep service offers realistic: Don't promise too much, disappointments have far-reaching consequences and positive surprises create greater customer loyalty.
23. The customer should benefit from the service: Customers need more than just friendly service, they need solid, correct information.
24. High-tech with the human touch: High-tech makes the human touch and understanding customer support all the more important.
25. Talk to customers: Always approach customers first and ask them what they are looking for, offer assistance.
26. Everyday service management: How can it be made easier for the staff to serve customers?
27. The cost of a lost customer: All forms of positive support are important. Unsatisfied customers tell others about their dissatisfaction 11 times.
28. Monitoring of the competition: Not only of other information providers, but monitoring of competition for public funding as well.
29. Market research: One can never have enough information about one's customers.
30. Know the users' needs: Learn about the information behavior, wants and expectations of the users – keep up with changes.
31. Find out which employees are the customers' favorites: Identify the employees who interact best with customers and use them as examples.
32. Communication: Communicative competency is a critical factor: Continual personal training is essential.
33. Smile: It makes both you and your communication partner feel good.

34. Take customers seriously: Every customer is individually important, make sure they know it!
35. Cite customer experience in public relations work: Case studies with real customers illustrate the quality of service best – the customers involved will appreciate this.
36. Customer groups: Establish user councils or customer representative delegations and include them in your work.
37. Superior performance: Average service is not enough, only the best is good enough for your library.
38. Employees and colleagues are customers too: Internal customers are just as important.
39. Let customers know that they are being cared for, e.g. with mailing campaigns or greeting cards sent to selected supporters / sponsors.
40. Make results public: 'Publicize' employee recognition and customer comments.
41. The crowning touch: Always go the extra mile to provide the service you yourself would like to receive (24-hour service, information preparation, active information, etc.)
42. Recognition and reward program for employees: Don't just talk about problems, discuss positive evaluations on a systematic and routine basis.
43. Breaks: Good customer contact is very demanding, so the employees involved need time to refresh their spirits.
44. Slogan: Come up with a powerful slogan that sums up your readiness to provide service and which customers can easily remember.
45. Mix work and fun: Don't neglect rituals and social life.
46. Negative feedback: Challenge customers to submit critical comments.
47. Freedom from prejudice: Take delight in the differences among your customers.
48. Appearance and atmosphere: How are the library staff dressed? Is the library clean, are the media well organized? Look at the library through the eyes of a customer.
49. Comfort and attractiveness: Furnishings and ergonomics of the work stations, light, design, etc.
50. Library terminology: Avoid jargon (OPAC, RAK, URL, etc.)